

IN THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in this application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for producing a saponified ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer, which comprises saponifying an ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer in an alcohol-based solvent in the presence of an alkali catalyst, wherein from 100 ppm to 15,000 ppm of water (based on the ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer) is added to the alcohol-based solvent, and wherein the ethylene content in the ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer is not more than 55 mol %.
2. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein a first solution comprising an ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer and an alcohol-based solvent and a second solution comprising an alkali catalyst and an alcohol-based solvent are introduced into a saponification reaction column through an upper portion thereof, and a vapor of an alcohol-based solvent is introduced into the saponification reaction column through a lower portion thereof.
3. (Original) The method according to claim 2, wherein water is fed into the saponification reaction column with the second solution.
4. (Original) The method according to claim 1, whereby the ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer is saponified to give a saponification degree of at least 90 mol %.
5. (Original) The method according to claim 4, wherein the ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer is saponified until its saponification degree is at least 98 mol %.
6. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein ~~the alcohol-based solvent contains~~ from 100 ppm to 3000 ppm water (based on the ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer) is added to the alcohol-based solvent.

7. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein from 1000 ppm to 15,000 ppm of water (based on the ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer) are added whereby to inhibit saponification of the ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer by consumption of the alkali catalyst and thus produce a saponified ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer having a saponification degree of from 90 mol % to 98 mol %.

8. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the ethylene content in the ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer is from 20 mol % to 70 55 mol %.

9. (New) The method according to claim 1, wherein the alcohol in the alcohol-based solvent is one or more selected from the group consisting of methanol, ethanol, n-butanol, and t-butanol.

10. (New) The method according to claim 1, wherein the alkali catalyst is selected from the group consisting of sodium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide, and alkaline metal alcoholate.

11. (New) In a method of manufacturing a film, sheet, package, and/or laminate comprising saponified ethylene-vinyl acetate, the improvement comprising producing the saponified ethylene-vinyl acetate according to claim 1.

12. (New) In a method of manufacturing a film, sheet, package, and/or laminate comprising saponified ethylene-vinyl acetate, the improvement comprising producing the saponified ethylene-vinyl acetate according to claim 2.

13. (New) In a method of manufacturing a film, sheet, package, and/or laminate comprising saponified ethylene-vinyl acetate, the improvement comprising producing the saponified ethylene-vinyl acetate according to claim 3.

14. (New) In a method of manufacturing a film, sheet, package, and/or laminate comprising saponified ethylene-vinyl acetate, the improvement comprising producing the saponified ethylene-vinyl acetate according to claim 4.

15. (New) In a method of manufacturing a film, sheet, package, and/or laminate comprising saponified ethylene-vinyl acetate, the improvement comprising producing the saponified ethylene-vinyl acetate according to claim 5.

16. (New) In a method of manufacturing a film, sheet, package, and/or laminate comprising saponified ethylene-vinyl acetate, the improvement comprising producing the saponified ethylene-vinyl acetate according to claim 6.

17. (New) In a method of manufacturing a film, sheet, package, and/or laminate comprising saponified ethylene-vinyl acetate, the improvement comprising producing the saponified ethylene-vinyl acetate according to claim 7.

18. (New) In a method of manufacturing a film, sheet, package, and/or laminate comprising saponified ethylene-vinyl acetate, the improvement comprising producing the saponified ethylene-vinyl acetate according to claim 8.

19. (New) In a method of manufacturing a film, sheet, package, and/or laminate comprising saponified ethylene-vinyl acetate, the improvement comprising producing the saponified ethylene-vinyl acetate according to claim 9.

20. (New) In a method of manufacturing a film, sheet, package, and/or laminate comprising saponified ethylene-vinyl acetate, the improvement comprising producing the saponified ethylene-vinyl acetate according to claim 10.